

# CONSUMERS'

PUBLISHED  
4 MONTHLY  
BY THE CONSUMERS' RESEARCH CORPORATION

guide

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 12

SEPTEMBER 6, 1937



FROM HIDES TO HANDS

# CONSUMERS' Guide

Issued every two weeks by the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

VOL. IV, No. 12 SEPT. 6, 1937

No BLINDFOLD buyer is the United States Government. A Government agency needing supplies asks the Federal Specifications Committee to write up the order. If no standard specification—detailed description of quality and kind of product desired—already exists, this Board usually calls on the Bureau of Standards to conduct tests and investigations on which to base specifications. These statements of quality requirements then go back to the Board. If satisfactory, bids are asked. Specifications are printed and added to the Federal Standard Stock Catalog for future use by Government agencies. No delivery is accepted without proof that specifications have been lived up to. In case of doubt, the Bureau of Standards again tests for compliance. (See CONSUMERS' GUIDE, July 13, 1936.)

Toothpaste needs of the Veterans Administration recently provided an interesting illustration of the way the Bureau of Standards, official tester, stands guard over the quality of goods purchased by the Government. Before bids were asked on a purchase of 168,000 tubes of this product, the Federal Specifications Committee requested Standards to prepare a specification. Experts at the Bureau set to work: read the literature on dentifrices, consulted manufacturers and chemists, tested many dentifrices. Realists, the Bureau does not set standards which nobody can meet, so in this case tests were made of commercial brands.

Scratchy toothpastes are harmful to tooth enamel, as every careful

consumer knows. The Bureau tested 25 brands for abrasion. The test is simple for Bureau experts, not so easy for household buyers: "Toothpaste shall be placed on glass and rubbed with a copper alloy similar in composition and shape to the 5-cent coin which has been previously rubbed against glass without scratching. The glass shall be of the usual soda-lime grade in noncorrosive microscope slides." If the paste scratches the glass it is rejected. Of 25 brands tested, 10 failed in this abrasion test.

Manufacturers who want consumers in general to know how their product rates against the Government standards can label their product with a statement guaranteeing that it conforms with the Government's specification for toothpastes. The National Bureau of Standards does not make routine or commercial tests of toothpaste, nor is it in a position to reveal the names of brands tested or the results arrived at in connection with drawing up Federal specifications. Copies of the toothpaste specification No. FFF-D-191 may be secured from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. The charge is 5 cents in coin or post-office money order. Stamps are not accepted.

MORE tips in buying dentifrices will be available by mid-September when the Council of Dental Therapeutics of the American Dental Association issues its new "Dental nostrums and the Public Health." First section of this booklet will discuss dangerous chemicals contained in preparations to bleach the teeth; the second treats of pyorrhea remedies; the third considers dentifrices in general. The latter includes the material previously released in a mimeographed bulletin, "Doctor, What Dentifrice Do You Recommend?", which was listed in the July 26 issue of the CONSUMERS' GUIDE and is no longer available.

CITIES, some of them, have their systems of testing for quality before buying, too. A recent report describes the work of the Bridgeport, Conn., city testing laboratory. Before 1935 the libraries, parks, public schools, and other city agencies did their own buying. Now purchasing activities are coordinated and over \$3,000,000 worth of goods passes through the testing laboratory annually. Standardization of products has been introduced. Combining orders, too, has made it possible to save. Some of the equipment in the laboratory was designed and built by the city clerk who operates the present purchasing system. . . . Instructive field trips for consumer study classes would be visits to city, State, and Federal purchasing departments.

CONSUMERS in Connecticut are going to get buying helps over the air now that that State's Consumers' Information Service has arranged to supply script to five radio stations. Sponsored jointly by the State Department of Agriculture, the Connecticut Consumers' Council, and the Works Progress Administration, this State sends 5-minute news releases three times a week to the radio stations for a "Voice of the Consumer" program. This active consumer agency is also starting in September a semimonthly bulletin of timely information on consumer problems to 1,000 clubs scattered throughout the State. Arrangements are being made to furnish a consumer news column to local newspapers. Headquarters of the Consumers' Information Service are in the State Department of Agriculture, Hartford, Conn.

This service is one of three operating with the aid of WPA funds. The other two are the Consumer Institutes of Massachusetts, and a consumers' project in Oklahoma City, sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners.

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## Facts about hides and skins to help you get your money's worth in leather goods and gloves

No one knows the name, the cave, or the country of the first man who got the brilliant idea of using the skin of an animal for clothing. But the idea was a good one.

Turning raw hides and skins into sturdy leather is one of the oldest manufacturing processes known to man. In primitive tribes it was the women who skinned the animals and tanned the pelts, sometimes softening the hides by laboriously chewing them. In time someone discovered a swifter and more satisfactory process. To the ancient Hebrews goes the credit of discovering the virtues of oak bark as a tanning agent. Today various barks and woods, as well as many other vegetable and mineral substances, are used in making leather. In ancient days, and in medieval Europe, tanning formulas were guarded as precious family secrets. Many of these formulas have been lost; others have been improved with the years, and modern

science has discovered new tanning processes. Modern machinery has taken some of the labor out of tanning and with the discovery of chrome tanning—a chemical process—has telescoped the time it takes to tan a skin.

Main object of the labor involved in changing a raw hide into leather is to preserve it and at the same time give it certain desired physical properties. Softness, flexibility, and porosity may be desired in some cases. On the other hand, as for sole leather, firmness, thickness, and solidity are desired. The chemical composition of animal skin still baffles scientists. They know that it is composed largely of proteins, but just how they are combined is still a mystery. It is the physical structure of skin, the fact that the proteins form innumerable fibers which are staunchly interlaced giving the skin both flexibility and strength, that makes leather such a unique, useful,

and workable material. The job of the tanner is so to treat these millions of protein fibers that they will not decay and at the same time preserve and accentuate the natural characteristics of the hide or skin.

Long before the first restless adventurer sailed the Atlantic, the American Indians were using leather for clothing and tepees. Their famous "buckskin tan" is still unexcelled for its softness, pliability, and ease with which it sheds water. Early settlers in need of shoes and clothing bargained eagerly for this leather. In the first part of the seventeenth century welcome arrivals to the New World were men skilled in the art of tanning. Since 1623, when Experience Miller, an English tanner, arrived in the country, the making of leather has steadily developed into an important American industry. Today the United States is the leading leather producer of the world. We tan more hides and skins and

# From HIDES to HANDS

make more leather commodities than any other nation. In 1 year we manufactured over 415 million pairs of shoes. In 1936, the value of the products of the leather industry was over 308 million dollars.

Workers in every continent in the world are affected by the United States leather industry. More than 110 countries send hides and skins and tanning materials to us. Though large amounts of chestnut wood and some hemlock and oak barks are produced here, our imports of tanning materials run into millions of dollars. Argentina and Paraguay send us quebracho; Sicily sends us sumac; Asia Minor, Central America, South Africa all contribute tanning agents. Hunters and fishermen in many regions earn their living by snaring sharks, reptiles, kangaroos for American tanners, who turn these exotic skins into leather. South America, Africa, Australia, India, and Europe send us millions of cattle hides and skins of calves, goats, lambs, and sheep each year. Foreign hides and skins which were shipped to the United States in 1936 were valued at \$54,770,000. Add to this the hides and skins of millions of domestic animals raised in our own pastures.

Source of the leather industry's most important raw materials is largely the by-product of the meat industry. Most of our leather is made from the hides and skins of animals primarily raised for food. Over 60 percent of the hides used in the United States are known as packer hides. The packer skins the animals, cures the hides and skins, generally by salting them away green, and stores them until they are bought by a tanner. Large-scale production and workers skilled in skinning animals make raw hides from packing houses the most desirable from the point of view of the tanner. Hides are sold by the pound. Average weight of the hide of a steer is 50 pounds. Price fluctuates depending

on the market conditions and quality of the hide. Damage from ticks, grubs, mange, barbwire, or branding means a scarred hide and consequently a marked leather.

Tanneries are modest, unprepossessing buildings. A low-flung structure covering the huge tanning vats sunk deep into the ground and providing space for machinery and for men to work is all that is absolutely necessary. In the eighteenth century wooden structures with their telltale odor were more common on the American landscape than they are today. In 1800 there were 2,400 tanneries in the United States. Today there are about 400. But in these modern tanneries many more men are employed and more leather is produced than in the small factories of a century ago.

Tanners specialize in making either heavy leather to be used for soles of shoes, machinery belts, harnesses, etc., or in light leathers for upholstery, the uppers of shoes, handbags, gloves, and novelties. Depending on the use to which they are going to be put, the hides and skins may go through from 20 to 80 different treatments—the entire process of tanning sometimes taking as long as 5 or 6 months.

Preparatory work before tanning either a hide or skin is pretty much the same. All of them are submitted to series of baths. Water cleanses them first from dirt and salt. A lime solution loosens the stubborn hairs, which are then removed by hand or by an unhairing machine. Hair from cattle hide is often sold to firms manufacturing ground mats for floor coverings, insulation, stuffing, and low-grade blankets. Fleshings and trimmings from the hide both before and after liming may eventually find their way into your bottle of glue. The hides and skins are then thoroughly cleaned. Skins to be used for light leathers are often pickled in a salt solution. The slimy white shape-

less mass lifted from this salt bath is ready at last for the tanning process which will turn it into leather. Many skins, especially those used for gloves, are shipped pickled to this country and the tanning and manufacturing of the gloves are done here.

Leather is tanned either by liquors and extracts from barks, woods, fruits and nuts, or by mineral salts, or by a combination of both or by a chamois or oil tannage. Most sole leather is vegetable-tanned—a process that takes from 2 to 6 months. The hides are soaked in a series of solutions graduating from weak to strong until they are thoroughly tanned. Then they are filled with extract, oiled, bleached, dried, and rolled.

Cattle hides are often split into several layers. By means of the splitting machine leather can be split to almost any desired thickness. The machine has enabled tanners to double their output in area of leather without increasing the number of hides used. When the hide or skin is split, the grain split (which was originally the hair side of the animal) brings the best price. Grain leathers, because of the closer-knit structure, are usually more durable than flesh splits from the same hide. Grain leather bears the design of the pores of the hide and skin unless it is concealed in the finishing process. Consumers are familiar with the grain design of some leathers. Pigskin and ostrich leather have distinctive grain patterns which attract the eye. Often a grain design characteristic of one kind of leather is embossed on an entirely different leather.

Important American contribution to the leather industry is the chrome process of tanning, in which a salt of the metal chromium is used. A skin, depending upon its thickness, can be tanned by the chrome process in as little as from 4 to 8 hours, but better leather results from a longer processing. Today most of the shoe-

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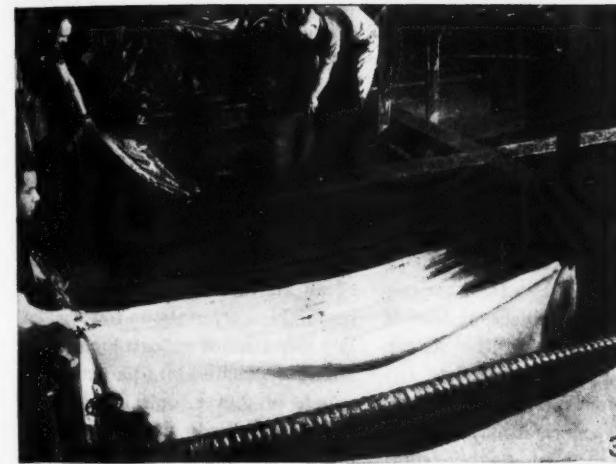
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SOME LEATHER PROCESSES. (1) Bunches of hides are immersed in a vat of lime solution. (2) Out of the lime bath, the hides are split through the middle. (3) In foreground, hides are about to be given a 5-week soaking in curing vats, filled with tannic acid; in background, others are being removed after a 5-week bath. (4) In this great drum hides are treated with oil. (5) Close-up of hides in the drying loft. (6) Sponged with hot water, the hide is rolled over and over to give it a glossy finish.



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**How gloves are made, as well as the quality of the skin, determines wearing quality. Finest gloves are table-cut, and often so labeled. Examine the kind of thread used in sewing, the method of stitching, the type of seam, before you buy.**

upper and light leathers are chrome tanned. Sometimes both a chrome and vegetable tannage are used to secure a leather combining the properties of these two processes.

Method of tanning skins white by using alum has been known for many years. As alum-treated leather is easily ruined by water, a combination of chrome and alum treatment is sometimes used for leather for shoes and dress gloves.

Metamorphosis of hides and skins into leather takes place in the tanning vats, but when they emerge they are still a most unattractive material. The tanning agents have removed most of the natural oils from the skin. To give the skins their original flexibility, oils and fats—often yolks of eggs, castor oil, neat's-foot oil, and fish oil—are put back into the skins. This "fat-liquoring" treatment also makes the leather more resistant to water. "Staking" and "plating" and "ironing" follow

the oil treatment on leathers to be used for shoe uppers. In these two processes the whole piece of leather is evenly softened, and the stretch and wrinkles are taken out of it.

Leather travels through many skilled hands before it is ready for the manufacturer of leather commodities. First highly skilled process on the program for light leathers is that of dyeing. Sometimes this is done simultaneously with the fat-liquoring. If only the surface is to be colored, the dye is brushed on by hand or by machine. Leather does not color readily. The reasons will not be fully known until the chemical constituents of leather are completely understood. A tribute to the patient and successful experiments of scientist and tanner is the fact that we do have gloves, bags, and shoes in rainbow colors that do not crock.

Finish given to leather, whether it is to be oiled, dyed and embossed, glazed, boarded, or brushed, is pri-

marily dictated by the nature and quality of the leather and the use for which it is designed. Whether leather is finished on the grain or flesh side depends on the methods used. Leather clothing and accessories are more often labeled with the finish than with the type of leather used. Thus suede gloves are made of leather which has been buffed on the flesh side. The consumer recognizes suede by the appearance and feel, but it is the rare shopper who will know whether the suede finish has been applied to goat, lamb, or sheepskin. Yet the kind of leather influences the wearing quality of the article. "Genuine leather" tells nothing of the kind and split of leather of most commodities. In the case of luggage, the Federal Trade Commission has ruled that luggage made of split leather must be labeled "split leather."

Leather can be so embossed that it would take careful examination by an expert to name the animal responsible for the leather. But the name of an animal, even though it has an honorable reputation for yielding fine skins, is not enough to insure the wearing qualities of a particular bag, a pair of gloves, or shoes. Quality depends on the health of the individual animal, the food he ate, the climatic conditions under which he grew. Poor hides and skins, along with poor meat, are a cost of drought. A fine healthy skin or hide is the first essential of good leather. Some parts of a hide make leather of better quality than others. Tanning and finishing processes can improve or detract from the ultimate quality of the leather. Facts on all of these antecedents of a piece of finished leather goods are seldom given the consumer to help him select the product which will give the best wear for the money.

Responsibility for receiving good service from leather articles rests in part on consumers' shoulders. Fine

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leather has a long life if it is well cared for. It is the oils and fats rubbed into leather which keep it supple and preserve it. In time these are bound to dry out, and the leather needs an additional supply. Shining shoes not only makes them look attractive but preserves the leather. The life of a suitcase can be prolonged with a castor-oil massage. Oiling also tends to make leather more waterproof. When leather does get a soaking it should never be allowed to dry quickly. The best quality leather can turn hard and stiff by exposing it when wet to heat hotter than the hand can stand. To revive a wet suitcase, a pair of shoes, a handbag, first wash them clean, oil them well, stuff them to preserve their shape, and then let them dry slowly.

The "never dry leather quickly" axiom holds for gloves, even those labeled "washable." It is a gamble to wash gloves at all unless they are so marked. How leather for gloves is tanned determines whether water will ruin them.

Most leather gloves are made out of sheep, goat, lamb, and pigskin, but are usually trademarked by the name of the finish. Suede gloves, as indicated previously, may be made either from lamb, sheep, or goat skin, finished on the flesh side. Glacé, or glossy finish, is usually applied on the grain side. As scars and other defects on the skins show through the glacé finish, the most perfect skins are reserved for this type of glove.

Glacé kid is the high-brow of gloves used for dress by both men and women. "Real kid" is made from immature goat or kidskins. Gloves made of lambskin, which is a fine lightweight pliable skin but has a looser grain than young goat and scuffs more easily, are sometimes sold as kid gloves.

Locales famous for producing a certain type of goat or sheep often become the name of a certain kind of

finish. "Cape" gloves at one time meant gloves made from the skins of a certain kind of sheep raised in South Africa and shipped from Capetown. Now "Cape" is a name given to gloves made from many varieties of sheepskin. The same is true of the costly mocha gloves. Original source of mocha leather was the Blackhead sheep raised near the town of Mocha in Arabia. Usage has made "mocha" the name of a soft velvety finish.

Thickness of leather is not a sign of strength in gloves. Thick leather may be stiff and boardlike and tear easily. Fine leather, either thick or thin, when drawn through the fingers will feel "alive." Even if it is thin it will be soft and supple and have body to it.

Wearing quality of gloves depends on how they are made as well as on the quality of leather used. Poorly cut gloves, even if made from the finest leather, may give unsatisfactory service. Most costly gloves are usually table cut, meaning that the process has been done by hand and the leather used in each pair of gloves has been handstretched so it has just the right give to it. Most gloves are pattern cut or machine cut. Finest American gloves which are table cut are often labeled as such.

Kind and quality of thread used in sewing a glove is important. Method of stitching and type of seam influences both the strength and beauty of the glove. Gloves are either machine sewn or hand sewn. Hand-sewn gloves are usually the most costly. Machine-sewn gloves are done with a lock, chain, or triple stitch. The latter technique, used on gloves of heavy leather, makes a practically rip-proof seam; for every two stitches forward one is taken back, so that each stitch is tied and the thread cannot ravel.

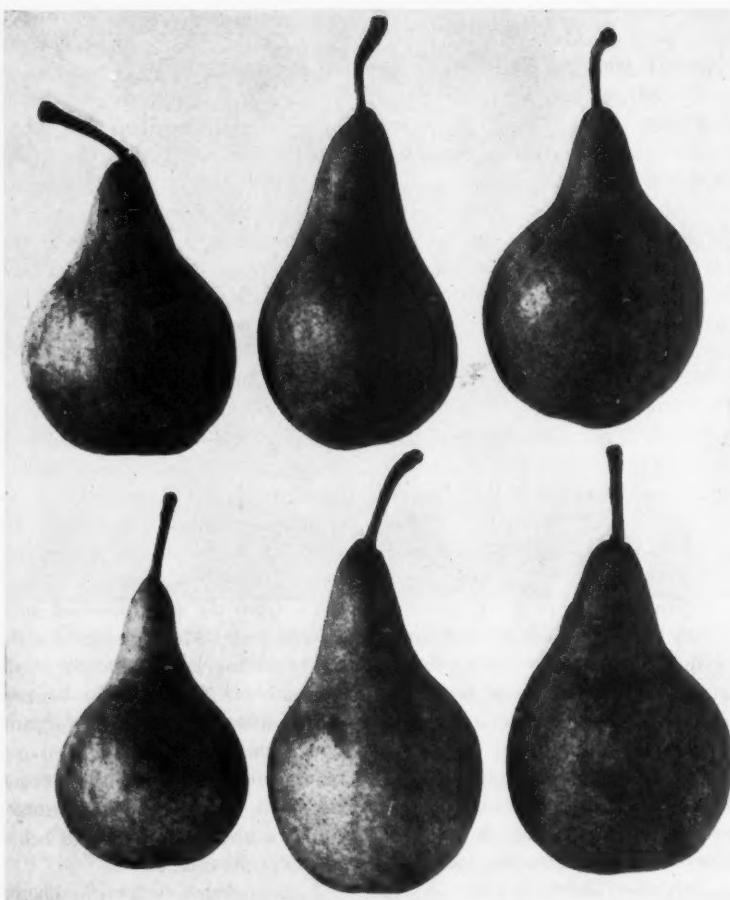
Seams are sewn on the inside or outside of gloves. Outseams are generally more lasting. Most diffi-

cult seam to make and one that is the most durable is the pique—in which the sides are sewn together by the chain stitch, but one edge of the leather slightly overlaps the other, exposing one raw edge. Overseam, in which the two edges are sewn together on the right side by an over-and-over stitch, used on dress gloves, makes an attractive glove. In buying them care should be taken to see that the seams are wide enough, otherwise they are apt to pull out.

To get good wear out of gloves, fit is important. Gloves should always be tested on whichever hand is the larger; with most people that is the right hand. Too small gloves mean burst seams and in time exposed fingers, as well as discomfort. Loose-fitting gloves are the best choice from the standpoint of wear and comfort. Moving space for the fingers means less strain on seams and leather. They are also warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, as they allow for the evaporation of perspiration. If the glove is clasped or buttoned, the fastener should be about one-half inch below the ball of the thumb.

Making gloves is a complicated process, sometimes requiring more than 50 different operations. From the history of the industry, one surmises that glove making gets in the blood and is transferred from generation to generation. In the twelfth century a group of Scotsmen living in Perth received a charter from William the Lyon, King of Scotland, giving them the right to make gloves. Their descendants ever since have been making them. Some of these Highlanders emigrated in 1760 to Fulton County, New York, and made that place the heart of the United States glove industry. Their descendants living in Gloversville and the vicinity are the skilled glove makers of today.

Next issue of the CONSUMERS' GUIDE will give tips on selecting shoes.



Champion dessert pears include the Beurre Bosc which comes in these sizes. Juicy, piquant, fragrant—at its best in fall months.

Remote as the connection seems, all pears are members of the rose family.

Best known of any pear is the Bartlett, a large handsome fellow that has been appearing at market for the last 2 months. In 1817 when Enoch Bartlett, of Dorchester, Mass., acquired an estate having on it some fruit trees, he would have been as surprised as his neighbors to learn that the pears he sold under his name would prove a sensation in the fruit world. But such was the case. This pear is golden yellow, with a reddish blush on the sunny side and a stippling of russet dots over all. The white flesh is fine-grained, though inclined to be granular at the center. Juicy and sweet, the Bartlett when well-grown sets a standard for fresh shipping pears that is hard to beat. In canning, too, it takes highest rank. On the Pacific coast the Bartlett is the first of the important commercial varieties to ripen, its picking season lasting from early July to late August. Two months in cold storage prolong its life as a fresh fruit until mid-October. The trees bear young and live long. Boon to the grower is their ability to adapt to a variety of soil and climatic conditions; despair of the grower is the Bartlett's susceptibility to blight—the black plague of the pear crop.

Consumers looking for the best in a dessert fruit should turn their attention to the Beurre Bosc. There is no mistaking the distinctive shape and color of this fruit. A long tapering neck leads to a full, perfectly symmetrical body. The rich yellow background of the skin is overlaid with russet. Fall months find the Beurre Bosc at its best—juicy, richly piquant, and fragrant.

Seckel alone surpasses the Beurre Bosc in eating qualities. This is the little, ruddy fruit so delicious in pre-

## PEARS APLENTY

**Largest crop on record is the experts' forecast for this succulent fruit, now rushing to consumer markets**

BITE into a pear and be glad that you are living in the twentieth century. It wasn't so long ago that this melting "butter-fleshed" fruit was unknown, although pears of assorted shapes, sizes, and flavors grew long before that. However, these earlier pear varieties were crisp-fleshed, the so-called *crevers* of the French. Not until the first half of the nineteenth century did the Belgians perform the experiments that

were to transform this fruit into its present luscious form. Then the fad of pear breeding struck amateur Belgian horticulturalists with all the force with which the candid-camera craze has swept our United States.

Two classes of pears grow in this country—the European and the Asiatic. Most of our pear varieties, including the popular Bartlett, belong to the first class. Such hybrids as the Kieffer combine both types.

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serves, pies, or eaten fresh. Were the fruits larger, Seckel would play second to no other fruit where popularity is concerned. Seckel pears have a smooth dull skin of reddish brown. Not notable for attractive coloring, the Seckel has, however, a pleasant trim contour. The juicy flesh has a delicate perfume and a spicy flavor. Because much of the aromatic tang lies in the skin, Seckels should never be peeled before eating.

Several other pear varieties deserve honorable mention. Clapp Favorite is fine for local trade but cannot stand shipping—in this respect unlike the Bartlett which it closely resembles. Look for this variety during late summer. Beurre d'Anjou is best of the early winter pears with its large smooth fruit borne on a stubby stem. The yellowish-white flesh is firm, tender, and of a heavy vinous flavor. For cooking and home canning the Kieffer deserves a good reputation, the product keeping its shape and color well. Proper ripening in storage will remove the astringent taste and coarse texture that have proved drawbacks when the fruit was eaten fresh. This pear ripens in late October and November to above medium size. Most widely distributed winter pear on the Pacific coast and one of the best for storage is Winter Nelis. Though harvested in September, this is the dessert pear that consumers will depend upon from Christmas until late spring.

Consumers who pick out fresh pears for eating shouldn't try to judge the fruit by color unless they are familiar with the pear color palette. According to variety, some pears may be ripe when still green, though other varieties may be immature even though the fruits have reached a high yellow.

Best buys in pears are generally firm, but not hard, and free from blemish. Press your thumb against the base of the stem. If the pear

yields to the pressure, the pear is ripe for immediate eating but too ripe for future use.

Some pear varieties suffer from "scald"—a transportation and storage disease caused by gases given off by the fruit. Severe scald cases leave the fruit skin badly discolored, flesh decayed. Another form of injury to watch out for is "limb rub", left by a tree limb rubbing against the fruit in the course of development. This appears as a roughening on the surface of the fruit and may cause hard woody spots in the flesh. As with all fruits, avoid wilted or shriveled pears.

The pear is normally picked when slightly immature and ripened in a cool dark place. Storage-ripened pears, moreover, have a finer texture than the tree-ripened fruit. However, with Bartletts the custom seems to have been to pick them too immature. To determine the exact time of picking maturity, growers in the Pacific States use a mechanical tester—a metal gadget that measures in pounds the pressure required to force a smoothly rounded plunger into the fruit to a definite depth. Through experimentation, growers are finding the pressure readings required by the different pear varieties.

By no means all pears reach the markets as fresh fruit. Estimates gave the annual per-capita consumption of commercially canned pears in 1934 as roughly a half pound—about one-fifth that of peaches, kingpin in the canned-fruit world. Canners put no premium upon pears of particularly fine flavor. What they are looking for is a fruit creamy in color tending to translucence, of tender flesh but with enough body so that there will be no disintegrating.

Quality grades for fresh pears, as for most fruits, have been set up by the United States Department of Agriculture. Though the use of these grades is optional, they are the basis of much of the trading in the wholesale market. Consumers bene-

fit indirectly since, by means of grades, retailers can stock products of nearly uniform quality. Fresh pears fall under the classifications U. S. No. 1, U. S. No. 2, and U. S. Combination Grade.

Canned pears have their own quality grades, based on color, uniformity of size and symmetry, absence of defects, and character of fruit. Top quality under these U. S. Department of Agriculture standards is "U. S. Grade A (Fancy)"; second comes "U. S. Grade B (Choice)", followed by "U. S. Grade C (Standard)." Grades below that hardly interest the consumer who is looking for pears for table use.

With pears plentiful, thoughts of homemakers may turn to home-canning ventures. For consumers who, having weighed the relative advantages of the homemade as against the commercially canned product and having counted costs of labor, equipment, etc., decide to try their own skill, here are a few hints that do not appear in every cookbook. To keep pears from turning dark while they are being prepared for canning, drop each piece of peeled fruit into a solution of water, vinegar, and salt for a short time. Exact proportions read 2 tablespoons of each of salt and vinegar to each gallon of water. Remember this tip when it comes to canning apples, peaches, and apricots, too.

Consumers planning to put to use those hard Kieffer pears growing in the home orchard may be interested in this suggestion: Investigations at the Department of Agriculture have shown that Kieffers improve in quality for canning by standing 2 weeks in a cool place ( $60^{\circ}$  to  $65^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit). Storage improves flavor and texture.

Pears can be packed in tin cans as well as in glass jars. Plain tin cans of either No. 2 or No. 3 size will do. You can pack the pears raw in

[Continued on page 18]

# WHAT PRICE MILK?

**Back of city milk plants are hundreds of thousands of dairy farmers whose living depends on fair prices for their product. In this third of our series on "Milk for Millions" we dig at the roots of their problem**

CURRENT among impudent small boys 15 years ago was the impudent question, "What does that have to do with the price of eggs?" Current question of bewildered milk consumers today, intent on finding out the whys and wherefores of milk price is, "What *does* have to do with the price of milk?"

Back of milk prices, as of other prices in our system of supplying human wants, are those two famous characters of all our economic dramas, Supply and Demand. Let Supply represent in this drama the amount of milk which farmers are willing to produce and Demand the amount of money which consumers are willing to pay for milk. Supply wants to get as much money for as little milk as possible. Demand wants to get as much milk for as little money as possible. Were this a play of two simple characters all by themselves there would be little excitement. Between them, they could quickly work out a compromise as to the amount of milk which Supply should produce and the amount of money that Demand should pay.

Supply and Demand in this modern age are not two simple characters who strut on the stage and fight out alone the battle of price. Almost never are they the sole characters in our economic dramas. Indeed, one of the greatest offenses committed against consumers is to make it appear that the every price they pay is fixed by a "law of supply and demand" and therefore cannot be questioned. Many who talk about

such a law would have consumers believe that, like gravity, this is a rule of Nature's about which humans can do nothing. Practically never are prices determined by the free play of such a simple "natural law."

Many other characters play important roles in this drama of milk prices, each of them reacting on or conditioning the principal characters, Supply and Demand.

First on the list are those affecting Demand. Milk, we have come to believe, is not like Thanksgiving turkey, a food for festivals. Consumers want it every day, and they want it fresh. Furthermore, they want not only milk but cream for their coffee, butter for their bread, ice cream for dessert, or a piece of cheese with pie or cheese for dinner dishes when meat supplies run low.

All of these are milk products. They compete with each other and with fluid milk for the money consumers are willing to spend for the product of cows. In addition, modern consumers want their milk pure and are willing to pay more for sanitary milk.

Nor is this all. Other foods compete for a share in consumers' pocketbooks with milk and its products. How much consumers can pay for milk depends partly on the cost of these other foods. Back of that, how much they have to spend for food depends, in part, on how much other necessities cost. Behind, is the cost of living in general in relation to the incomes consumers have to spend. And above and around consumers'

capacity to spend money for milk or for anything else are all kinds of forces working on their desire to have this or that, to do this or that, to be this or that.

These, in the large, are man-made, not nature-made forces and conditions. They all act to set a top limit to the price that consumers are willing to pay for milk and milk products. Let anything come along to change any one of these factors and sooner or later the price of milk changes. Still more numerous are the forces tugging at the coat tails of Supply.

Between consumers and suppliers of milk are processors and distributors. The cost of their services is a first charge on the price consumers pay for milk and milk products. In chapter II of this series (*CONSUMERS' GUIDE*, Aug. 23, 1937) we discussed some of the wastes in the way milk is now distributed in some cities. Unnecessarily high costs of processing and distributing milk may not only cut down the amount of milk consumers can buy but also reduce the amount of milk farmers can sell. Both farmers and consumers have a large stake in the efficiency of the middlemen between them.

Again, both consumers and farmers have much at stake in the price which processors and distributors pay to farmers for the raw material of consumers' milk products. This price not only is a charge on consumers but it may encourage farmers to increase their supply of milk or discourage them from doing so. More

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than any other agricultural product, milk is subjected to man-made controls. Let's see how these operate.

How many cows there are and how much milk each of them gives is, of course, the first fact that determines how much milk can—if farmers wish to sell it—come to market. Nature has something to say about both. Weather can increase or decrease the number of cows and the amount of milk they give by making feed expensive. Consumers felt the blow on their pocketbooks when the great drought of 1934 forced farmers to slaughter many of their cows and made feed costs so high that many farmers could not afford adequate rations for their herds. The result was that the supply of milk was cut drastically, and prices shot up. Indirectly, too, by making it relatively less expensive to raise milk cows than to raise meat animals, weather conditions can boost the amount of milk we get or, if the reverse happens, can cut that amount. Farmers can, if forced, shift from one type of production to the other.

Milk is produced all over the country. In every State there are cows whose milk is not needed at home and is, therefore, available for sale. But some sections of the country have many more cows than have others. Credit nature again for the fact that our cow population is densest in the northern States east of the Dakotas. Dairy farms tend to concentrate there because the climate is favorable, pastures are good, and feed is cheaper. Another reason is because that's where human population is concentrated and therefore where markets are best.

These two reasons for locating the cow belt in the area from Minnesota and Wisconsin on the west to New Hampshire and Massachusetts on the east press unequally on the two ends of the belt. The eastern end is conveniently near great markets, but it costs more to feed a cow in the East.



Dots in this map represent concentration of population. The bigger the dot and the closer together, the more consumers of milk. Concentration of cows duplicates largely concentration of population, except in the great North Central dairy States.

The western end is not conveniently near great markets, but it has the advantage of lower feed costs. With production abundant and markets distant, the great dairy States of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin specialize in manufactured dairy products which are not as perishable as fluid milk, can be stored for long periods, and are not so expensive to ship hither and yon over the country.

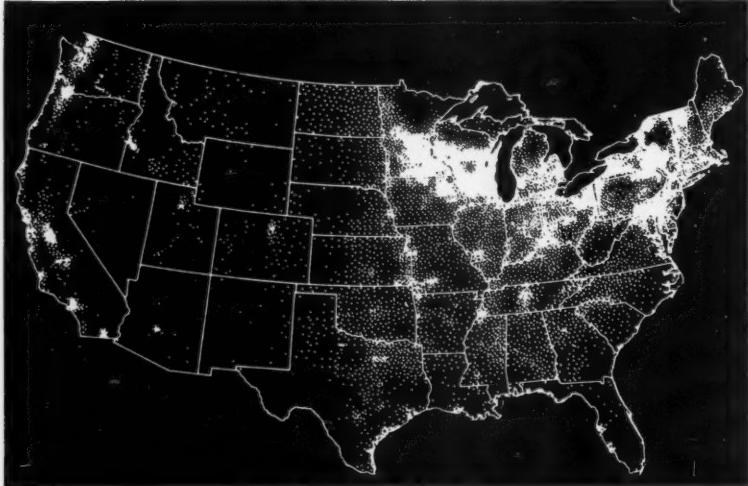
Dairy States set the pace for all other dairy farmers. Their costs of production are lower, and so their milk products compete in price with milk products produced everywhere else. In 1933, 45 percent of all the creamery butter products in the United States was made in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin; 62 percent of all the cheese produced was made in Wisconsin and New York; 53 percent of all the evaporated milk was produced in Wisconsin and California.

Now if costs of production were the only thing determining the price farmers get for milk, consumers might expect that these low-cost dairy farms in the big dairy States

would supply them with all their milk and manufactured milk products. But production costs are not the whole story. Other costs enter into the picture.

Carting milk from cows to kitchens costs money, and the farther apart they are the more it costs. Farmers living close to markets have the advantage of less expensive delivery. They have a disadvantage, however, in higher costs of production; land costs more, feeding cows costs more. In milk markets free from trade restrictions, therefore, fluid milk can be produced near a city only so long as farmers can counterbalance their higher production costs with lower transportation costs. The farther from the city the farmer is, the higher grow transportation costs and the lower are returns to farmers.

Most expensive of all forms in which to ship milk is fluid milk. Some 87 percent is water. Squeeze out the water and you get a more concentrated product which is relatively cheaper to ship. Cream is a less expensive form in which to ship milk; butter and cheese still cheaper.



The "cow belt" stretches from Wisconsin and Minnesota on the west to New Hampshire and Massachusetts on the east. The eastern end is conveniently near great markets; the western end has the advantage of low feed costs. Each dot represents 2,500 cows.

When farmers outside of a city find that transportation costs eat up too much of the money they get, instead of shipping whole milk, they separate off the cream, feed the skim milk to the livestock, and ship cream into the city. Since cream is more compact, more valuable per pound, than milk, the farmer at this distance from market makes more than he would if he shipped the whole milk.

Competition becomes keener for the producer of cream, for the wider the circle grows the greater the number of farmers competing for a particular market. To be able to sell to such a market the farmer must always have an advantage either in production or in transportation costs—provided trade restrictions do not give him extra advantages. Stretch the circle still wider, and the farmers on the outer rim find it cheaper to ship milk as butter because transportation costs of this form of milk are still lower than for cream. For these farmers competition becomes keenest of all, because their product must compete in price with butter made everywhere, in-

cluding butter made in dairy sections where costs are lowest. Economic pressure of costs of production and transportation is not the only factor determining the price of milk. Milk for fluid purposes is more expensive to produce than milk for other purposes. Requirements of city milk ordinances lay additional costs on dairy farmers.

Reasonable sanitary protection of milk supplies is a good thing, because milk not only is a necessary food but easily contaminated. Sanitary protection in some cities is not stringent enough. Sometimes it becomes unnecessarily protective of public health and acts to reserve city milk markets for neighboring dairymen, as milk inspectors themselves have pointed out. (See *CONSUMERS' GUIDE*, Aug. 9, 1937.) At such times it is like a tariff barrier, keeping out milk from distant low-cost production areas. Ordinarily city health regulations for milk apply only to milk for bottling; sometimes they may apply to milk for cream; practically never do they apply to milk that is to be used in making butter

or other milk products, although some States have regulations governing manufacturing milk. Because milk ordinances are not the same in every city, farmers supplying one city cannot easily shift to supplying another city, though there may be economic inducements to do so.

If sanitary requirements for fluid milk were made uniform throughout the country, the "law" of supply and demand would be freer to operate, and in many localities the cost of a bottle of milk should come down, although markets not now operating under satisfactory regulations might have to pay more for their safer milk.

Nature comes along to complicate the problem of fluid-milk prices still more. Most cows have calves in the spring. When grass is greenest feeding cows is cheapest. When pastures grow bare, farmers, have to buy more feed for their herds. Both because of spring calving and cheaper feed, milk production has its peak in May and June, its low in October and November. Consumers, on the other hand, demand a fairly steady supply of milk, winter and summer. Their purchases do not go up and down with the seasons as much as does production.

To meet consumer demand for milk in October and November, when production is lowest, a city milk company may contract to buy milk from, say, 10 farms. When May and June roll round, the milk company finds these 10 farms are supplying about 30 percent more milk than they did in the winter months. There are two ways in which the city milk company might face that situation: one, they might say to the 10 farmers: "We don't need all your milk now, so we will buy from only seven of you." If they did that, the three farmers who thereby lost their market in summer would not be able or willing to sell again next winter. City consumers, in that case, would be out of luck 6 months later when

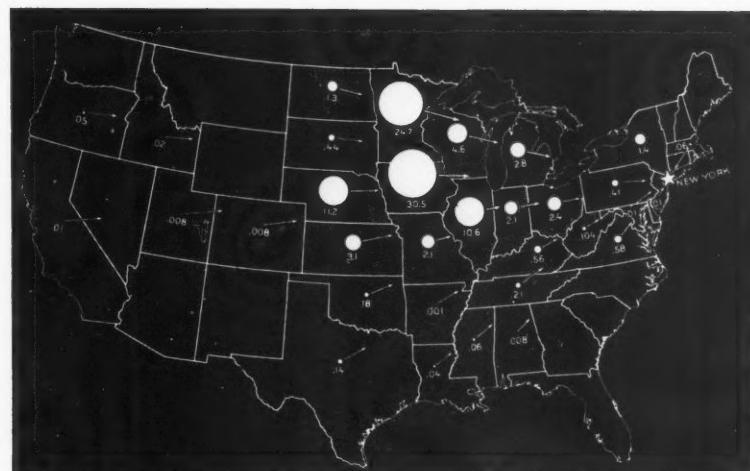
they want milk just as much as they do in summer.

Suppose, instead of cutting off the three farmers, the city milk company tries the second way out: buys all the milk the 10 produce, winter and summer. The extra 30 percent in summer must be disposed of. One way would be to slash the price of a bottle of milk in the hope that consumers, being able to buy it cheaper, would buy up the extra supply. Another way is to manufacture the extra milk into milk products and sell them. In actual practice most milk companies do the latter, since consumers probably couldn't be induced by the price cuts distributors could make to drink all the surplus. In some markets attempts are being made to induce farmers to get the better of nature by arranging that some cows give birth to calves in the fall, so that their herds will produce milk evenly the year round.

Now, the fluid milk which the company sells does not have to compete in price with fluid milk sold in other cities. But the milk which the company turns into manufactured dairy products does have to compete with milk produced elsewhere. It has to compete in price with milk produced in the very cheapest production area, because manufactured milk products—not restricted by sanitary regulations, and cheap to transport—can be shipped anywhere in the country to undersell any competitors.

Because of these different kinds of competition, the milk company can pay a higher price for the milk that goes into bottles than it can pay for the milk that is, say, powdered or condensed. But the farmer, supplying fluid milk, victim of this competition, naturally complains: "It's all the same milk. It cost me just as much to produce one batch as the other. What about me?"

Questions such as this lead to over-the-fence conversations between



Most cities depend heavily on mid-western dairy States for butter. This map shows areas shipping butter to New York City. Two States—Iowa and Minnesota—furnish 55 percent of New York City's supply in normal years; New York State supplies less than 2 percent.

farmers. Out of such conversations have grown milk-producer cooperatives—organizations of farmers around a city who realize, much as factory workers have come to realize, that in "union there is strength." Together they can bargain with city milk companies more advantageously than can individual farmers, competing with each other. Most city milksheds (the area from which cities draw their fluid milk) have these bargaining cooperatives which add a new element of control in the price of milk.

Human control of prices must always compete with economic control of prices, unless the humans have a monopoly control of supplies. Just as workers lose strikes for higher wages when employers are able to hire nonstrikers for less money, farmers fail to get higher prices for their milk when city milk companies can buy milk for less money from an unorganized farmer. In attempting to organize, therefore, producers' cooperatives did everything they could to bring all the farmers in the milkshed into their organization. City milk companies, just as naturally, in

those early organizing days kept looking around for farmers who were not cooperators with whom they could bargain for milk at a lower price.

Whether or not this mutual struggle—or the struggle for membership between competing co-ops—is responsible for increasing tremendously the flow of milk into the cities, the fact is that in most cities the volume of milk pouring in is much more than enough to fill all the milk bottles which consumers now buy. It is equally clear that the larger these "surplus" supplies are the more stresses and strains are put upon the human controls over prices.

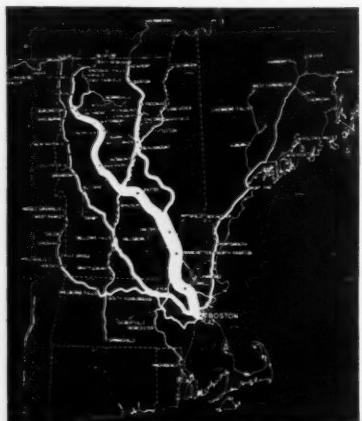
Years of struggling have been followed in most markets by years of negotiating. Where possible, city milk companies and producers' cooperatives work out between themselves a mutually satisfactory agreement to supply so much milk and to pay such and such a price. Consumers, as always, are the ultimate payers of such a price, but seldom are they parties to the working out of producer-distributor agreements. Because consumers are not heard

from, the temptation arises for producers and dealers to compose their differences by pushing up consumer prices. This temptation, when indulged, may resolve for a while the problem of adequate prices to farmers, but the cure may be temporary only. For when prices unduly high bring about an increase in supply, this greater supply eventually forces a change in pricing policy. Meantime, however, these ups and downs may undermine the strength of producer co-ops as bargaining agents. Thus each in his own way, producer and consumer, can be injured by prices that are too high.

When amicable agreements are difficult to arrive at, and the struggle for what farmers believe to be a fair price becomes too hard, then they turn for help to a third party—the State or Federal Government. Thus, laws creating milk boards or milk administrators and laws controlling prices have come about. Despite the fact that they must foot the bill and are as much concerned as producers and distributors in how

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Rivers of milk and cream, not actual but figurative, flow into Boston from no less than five States surrounding Massachusetts. The thickness of the white lines shows the relative importance of the sources of supply. A city's milk supplies come from outlying areas; some cream comes from more distant places; much butter comes from the Middle West.



## **From neighborhood clubs to billion-dollar business, farmer and consumer purchasing cooperatives make news**

JOINING up with a going concern, most cooperators admit, is a lot easier than getting an enterprise started. Cooperative literature is meager on the early growing pains of its enterprises. The *CONSUMERS' GUIDE* told in detail (May 3, 1937 issue) the week-by-week development of a cooperative grocery business in Washington, D. C. Now comes another tale of beginnings from a farm woman in Pennsylvania. Her husband is an active official of a marketing cooperative.

"Important as is the marketing cooperative, it cannot go all the way and tie up with the consumers until they, too, organize", this pioneering woman writes. "This past summer we made the plunge. With a friend, who is also keen about the idea, I sent post cards to 15 neighbors who had at some time expressed an interest in cooperation, asking them to meet at our house to discuss doing something about it.

"To our delight 18 people gathered that first evening and, as a starter, we enrolled 9 members, each representing a family and paying \$3 annual dues. There was much interested discussion. Some felt we should be a study club for a while; others that we must study, of course, but not try to 'learn swimming by the piano-stool method.' We decided to tackle some buying together to get wholesale prices for tested goods. At the same time we would study our needs as to coal, fuel oil, laundry, and gasoline, and try some collective bargaining for the needs

of the entire group in those things.

"We grew to 30 members almost at once, and for the first 2 months met weekly at members' homes, though normally we felt a monthly meeting was best. We took out two shares at \$5 each in Cooperative Distributors, New York, to which a few members already belonged and which has as its chief objective education with mail orders of tested articles as additional service. They in turn are members of the Cooperative League, so we tie up with the movement as a whole. As an associate member of Cooperative Distributors, we received from them a carefully worked out constitution and sample purchasing contracts for coal, laundry, and other items.

"We began business by buying 100-pound lots of soap through Cooperative Distributors, later adding many other things. From Eastern Cooperative Wholesale we purchase case lots of nonperishable groceries, such as canned goods. A local mill supplies flour, corn meal, and other supplies from grain we buy or grow.

"Our first local purchasing contract was for coal. Each member filled out a questionnaire as to amount and kind of fuel probably needed for the winter, previous dealer, quality of his coal and service, and other necessary data. To all dealers with satisfactory records we sent a form letter stating our bulk needs approximately, requesting specifications of their fuel, market retail price, and what saving we might expect in return for this unso-

lited bulk buying and cash payment. We found all coal practically the same, as the anthracite region is a small one, and it was good to find the lowest bid was from a dealer practically in the center of our area and with a perfect record for service.

"Next we tackled fuel oil, then laundry, and are working on groceries and gasoline. In each case, upon the signing of the contract, the dealer receives a list of members; members place their own orders, pay the retail market price, and the dealer sends a monthly statement and a check for savings to the club treasurer. The club, of course, assumes no responsibility for members' bills, except that if any member gets over 30 days behind, he loses all club buying privileges until he catches up.

"So we are embarked on an effort to study and analyze the problems of producer, distributor, and consumer in order to tackle wisely our common course as ultimate consumers. It is hard, painstaking work to build soundly step by step, to curb enthusiasm from taking us too fast, to develop courage against criticism when unfair and wisdom to use it when of value, and to study and work steadily as fast as our limited time, energy, and means will allow. It is tremendously challenging and is, also, specially satisfying in the way it cuts across all the usual barriers of small neighborhood groups and enlists people of such varied capacities and interests in a common effort to make the most of our resources, both human and material.

"We were very proud of our first payment of savings returns, but I am not sure it might not have been wiser to hold them for expansion in the early years of a club.

"We now have 60 members and are studying possibilities of a gas pump of our own with an office usable as a depot for handling case lots of groceries as well as gasoline, oil, and tires. We badly need a

working center, but refuse to take on regular expense until we see quantity of business furnishing sufficient margin to cover such expense. However, we have great hopes of achieving it by the beginning of our second summer, for business and consumer interest are growing."

BORROWING a well-tested educational idea, cooperators open their first national training school on October 11, in New York City, at which students will first have an intensive training period for 8 weeks, and follow that with 8 weeks in cooperative business, so as to test theory against practice. The Co-operative Institute, as the new school is to be known, has been established by the Cooperative League of the U. S. A. Class work will be done in New York City; field work will be done there and in other eastern cooperatives. The registrar of the new school is himself now completing a course at the Cooperative College, Manchester, England.

COOPERATIVE buying for farm production marches on! Last year 73,000 members of Eastern States Farmers' Exchange of Springfield, Mass., obtained through their cooperative, 366,140 tons of feed, 41,723 tons of fertilizer and liming materials, 5,343,282 pounds of field seeds, 192 carloads of seed potatoes, and large quantities of miscellaneous farm supplies. Machinery to make this service possible includes 26 field men, 567 representatives, and 33 Eastern States service warehouses. Among this group are a considerable number of local cooperative organizations.

NEARLY 160 cooperative stores and buying clubs in the East now use the services of the Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, in New York City for their supplies. A year ago its services were used by only 30 cooperatives. Formerly acting as a

broker for retail stores, the Wholesale now distributes its own co-op label products. Its co-op label lines include 155 products. Business during the first 4 months of 1937 totaled \$160,900 as against a little over \$85,000 in the same period of the previous year.

EUROPEAN cooperators reviewed in our July 12, 1937 issue ("Six Americans Look at European Cooperatives") apparently don't let the grass grow under their feet. Figures on 1936 business, released recently by the International Cooperative Alliance, show these gains:

**SWEDEN.**—A membership boost of 17,000 in 1936, bringing total membership up to 585,000, or more than one-third of the families in Sweden. Cooperative business increased \$6,917,000 to total \$111,494,000 in the past year.

**NORWAY.**—Membership swelled 10,000 to a new total of 148,000, approximately one-fourth of the nation's families. Retail cooperatives did a business of \$12,400,000, 12.4 percent greater than the previous year. More than 44 percent of all commodities handled through cooperative stores were produced in factories owned by the co-ops. Co-operative production in 1936 exceeded \$5,000,000 for the first time in Norwegian cooperative history.

**FINLAND.**—Membership reached 273,000, a gain of 8,000 members in the year. With the opening of 136 new stores, business of retail co-ops increased 12 percent to a total of \$30,000,000. Finland's cooperative wholesale society did over \$5,000,000 worth of business, which was 27 percent more than 1935's trade.

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA.**—Retail co-ops, affiliated with the central cooperation union of the country, report a membership of over 380,000 and a business of \$35,000,000. The co-op

wholesale business in 1936 came to \$7,800,000.

**FRANCE.**—The cooperative wholesale society in this country boasted its sales 13 percent to \$56,000,000. Hitherto small producers of the goods they sell, French cooperatives last year manufactured commodities valued at \$3,500,000 for distribution through their retail stores.

**GREAT BRITAIN.**—Giant of all cooperatives, the cooperative movement in this country added 330,000 new members in 1936 and brought their total up to 7,815,000. Business swelled \$70,000,000 to an aggregate for the year of \$1,170,000,000.

Scottish people seem to be as "sold" on the cooperative way of doing business as are their English neighbors. Eighteen out of every 100 people in Scotland are members of cooperatives, and in one county the cooperatives claim 42 out of every 100 citizens. Last year's sales by the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society topped 100 million dollars. Fifty factories are operated by

One-eighth of all farm supplies were purchased cooperatively last year through 4,472 cooperatives whose purchases were valued at \$315,000,000, according to the Farm Credit Administration, which has prepared this map to show where this business is concentrated.



this cooperative to produce food, clothing, furniture, drugs and cosmetics, tobaccos, candy, and other consumer goods. A separate organization, the United Cooperative Baking Society of Glasgow, supplies bakery products to most of the local societies throughout the country. Each week it grinds many thousands of bushels of wheat which it imports from the United States, Canada, the Argentine, and Australia. The wheat, ground into cooperative flour, baked in cooperative ovens, sold in cooperative stores, goes to cooperative members at 15 cents for a 4-pound loaf, and members get back a 12½-percent patronage dividend on all their purchases.

**ESTHONIA.**—Largest percentage gain in business of any country was recorded by the Estonian wholesale cooperative with an increase of 29 percent.

Substantial gains in business are reported, also, for Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Switzerland, Denmark, and Austria.

**B**USINESS statements of corporations, even if they do a million-dollar business, are sometimes dry reading, but cooperators find the Year Book of the Central Cooperative Wholesale at Superior, Wis., full of human interest. Consumer societies affiliated with this wholesale distributed over \$9,000,000 worth of goods in 1936 and netted in savings nearly half a million dollars. Net savings for all stores, 4.64 percent of sales, were the largest in their history. All stores together increased their volume of business in 1936, 21 percent over the previous year. Three years ago only 10 of the member societies rang up more than \$100,000 of sales; now 27 achieve this level of business. One retail co-op exceeds a million dollars, and 9 did more than \$200,000 in 1936. The Wholesale's own volume hit a record increase in the year of \$660,000.

## WHAT PRICE MILK?

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these laws work out, most consumers are strangely quiet about such legislation and its administration.

Confronted with a tangled problem, such as milk prices, consumers scratch their heads. They want milk. Many of them get no milk at all, and their bodies are testimonies to the damage that lack of milk can inflict. Others want more than they are getting now. They think maybe they could get more if milk cost less. But consumers want, too, a fair price paid to farmers, for they know that less than a fair price ultimately will mean not more, but less, milk.

First step to greater participation by consumers in the problems of milk producers is understanding how farmers are now paid for their milk. In a later issue of the *CONSUMERS' GUIDE* we will explain the various current price schemes.



**Many of the questions which our readers shoot back at us are queries which others, besides the writers, would like answered. As far as possible we will share our replies to these consumer problems with all readers in this new department**

**H**ow is corned beef made and why is it so called?"

Corned beef is beef that has been cured for several weeks in a salt brine that may contain several other ingredients—such as sweetening and preservatives. The name, apparently, has nothing to do with our cereal corn, but comes from the former way of dry-preserving with salt grains, or "corns", to use the Anglo-Saxon word. Though methods have changed, the old term "corned" continues.

Just as consumers can buy steaks and chops coming from different quality grades of beef—Prime, Choice, Good, Medium, etc.—so they can buy corned beef of various qualities, depending upon the price they are willing to pay. In the better grades the choicest cuts are usually reserved for eating fresh. In most markets, however, the demand for the lower-priced plates and rumps and briskets does not come up to the supply, so these parts are marketed largely as corned beef.

Once consumers have satisfied their taste for juicy sirloins smooth-

ered in onions, or steaming stews and hot dogs, the United States hasn't a large surplus of meat left over to be canned. In the Argentine things are different. The vast quantities of beef which are produced far exceed the home demand. So there is a large amount that is left for export, and is shipped as fresh and canned beef. The less choice carcasses consequently find their way to canneries to be converted into canned corned beef. That is why consumers may find Argentinian labels on the corned beef cans on grocery shelves.

**A**T WHAT stage does veal become beef, and when does lamb turn into mutton? What is the difference between veal and 'baby' beef?"

To give a loose definition—veal is the meat of calves from 12 weeks to 1 year of age. Actually *immaturity* is the thing that determines when veal is veal, and that is something that can't be measured in terms of age, weight, or size. Different stages of development bring

changes in flesh, and therein lies the distinction between veal and beef.

"Baby beef" is another phrase loosely used. It designates the meat of a young animal that has been force-fed and generally marketed around 12 to 18 months of age.

Maturity is the thing, likewise, that distinguishes mutton from lamb, a maturity shown in flesh and bone changes. Lamb carcasses usually have smaller, softer bones and light to dark pink flesh. They are under 1 year of age. Yearling mutton comes from animals about 12 to 24 months old. Color of flesh ranges from pink to light red. Mutton may be light to dark red in color and comes from mature sheep 2 years old or over.

**L**AST CHRISTMAS I bought a turkey at the local market, and when I came to draw the bird I found the meat bluish in color and the liver diseased. I destroyed the turkey and the market returned the money, but I wonder why the Government permits such products to be sold in the first place."

No law requires processors of poultry products to have Federal inspection of their plants. It is true that the United States has a Meat Inspection Act—but its provisions do not apply to chickens or turkeys.

Some full-drawn chickens and turkeys sold in certain cities bear this mark—Inspected and Certified by Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture. This mark means that a staff under the control of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has rendered consumers the same service as regards their poultry that the Bureau of Animal Industry gives them where meat is concerned. There is this difference, however. Poultry processors must take voluntary action to procure this guarantee, and they must pay for it themselves.

That inspection of poultry is gradually growing is attested to by ordinances in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and various other cities requiring all drawn poultry shipped into their markets to be inspected.

The fact that the particular turkey in question was not drawn would indicate to the consumer that it had not gone through any inspection. Inspectors do not have X-ray eyes, so must draw every bird to find its condition.

An undrawn bird might be graded for quality, however, though in this process disease would not necessarily be discovered. The United States Government maintains this grading service, stamps the quality mark on boxes in which the turkeys are packed or upon a tag attached to each bird. Packers or groups of growers pay for this service.

Turkeys graded and tagged by the Government for the retail market are classified as Young or Old, Prime or Choice. Consumers who purchase a U. S. graded Prime turkey are pretty sure of getting a well-fleshed and well-fattened bird practically free from blemish. A Choice turkey is fairly well fleshed, but may show slight defects.

Ten States—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska supply the retail market with turkeys graded and tagged by the United States. Turkey growers in these States belong to a cooperative known as the Northwestern Turkey Growers Association. Members are required to have their turkeys graded if they want to share in co-op benefits. Many of these turkeys, of course, reach other markets for holiday trade.

Government grading service for poultry is available in large cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Washington, and St. Louis.

Many States have State grades, too. Among these are Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. These are under rigid supervision of the various State departments of agriculture.

If consumers want their Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys to come with a clean bill of health, it is up to them to make their voices heard in asking their merchants for inspection services.

"I HAVE heard a great deal about budgeting, but all budgeting books look like plain bookkeeping books. I do not understand bookkeeping and dislike anything to do with arithmetic. Is there any way to live by a budget without learning bookkeeping and spending hours over it?"

Here is a problem that is a real stickler. There is an "envelope system" of budgeting which certain social-service agencies have found useful in cases where homemakers have difficulty in writing. According to this method the homemaker decides about how much money will be needed for various classes of items—food, clothing, housing, etc.—and each week puts the required amount into the proper envelope. Then all payments for one purpose are made from one special envelope. However, this system has so many drawbacks that it can't be recommended generally. For one thing, it means keeping more money in the house than is required from day to day. Unless income is very small and comes in by the week, it is impractical. Besides, there is no way of telling what the year's expenses have been, unless slips bearing the amounts withdrawn are put in the various envelopes, and records of expenditures made from these at regular intervals.

Any way you look at it, good budgeting calls for some bookkeeping—though simplified methods are

not as fearsome as consumers have been led to expect. After all, the records are not an end in themselves, but the basis for controlling current expenditures and planning so that a family may have the best possible living in its financial circumstances.

Valuable tips for simple budgeting can be found in various Government publications. Farmers Bulletin No. 1553, "Planning and Recording Family Expenditures", will help you make up your mind about the best type of records for your particular needs. The Farm Family Account Book, also published by the Department of Agriculture, is an actual ruled notebook for consumer use. Farmers Bulletin No. 1557, "Diets To Fit the Family Income", will help with food budgeting problems. All three are on sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., the bulletins for 5 cents apiece and the account book for 15 cents.

## PEARS APLENTY

[Continued from page 9]

the container and then cover with hot sirup and process them, or you can precook the pears in boiling medium sirup from 4 to 8 minutes, according to their size and firmness, and then pack them hot in the cans and process. Pears packed raw and covered with hot sirup will need 20 minutes of processing in the boiling water bath in No. 2 cans. In No. 3 cans they will need 25 minutes. If precooked, they call for 20 minutes of processing. Full instructions for home canning are included in the Department of Agriculture publication, "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats", on sale for 5 cents by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Crop forecasters predict that consumers can have all the pear salads

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and pear pies they want this year. The 1937 crop is to be the largest on record, they say, reaching the 30,400,000-bushel mark, as compared with the 27,000,000 bushels produced in 1936 and the 24,300,000 for the 5-year period 1928-32. Two-thirds of this bumper harvest will come from the Pacific Coast States of Washington, Oregon, and California. California will run far in the lead, with her 10,000,000 bushels. Michigan, with over 1,000,000 bushels, will head the list of pear-growing States east of the Rockies, followed by New York. Altogether, 42 States are represented in production estimates.

As a means of preventing markets from being glutted and prices from dropping to low levels, for the last 3 years fruit handlers in California have included pears in their fresh-fruit marketing agreement adopted under the Agricultural Adjustment Act. By this agreement, there could be: (1) Limitation of the shipment of any grade or size of fruit; (2) limitation of total shipments by periods within the marketing season; and (3) regulation of daily shipments by control from various concentration points.

With the same end in view—the maintenance of pear prices on an even keel—the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation purchased surplus quantities of California Bartlett pears during July and August, these to be distributed to persons on relief rolls. This year, therefore, many needy persons will have their diets enlivened with a juicy healthful fruit. Funds for the pear-buying program are authorized by Section 32 of the amendments to the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

*Our cover photograph and those on page 5 are by William M. Rittase, courtesy of "Fortune" magazine.*

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THIS ISSUE

1. What is meant by the statement that the Government is not a "blindfold buyer" of supplies?
2. Give one test used by the Bureau of Standards in judging toothpaste.
3. What is the difference between grain-split and flesh-split leather? Which is more durable?
4. How can consumers prolong the life of leather articles?
5. What points should consumers consider in buying gloves?
6. How are the costliest gloves cut? Can consumers tell if gloves are cut in this manner?
7. What percent of all farm supplies in the United States were purchased cooperatively last year?
8. What area comprises the "cow belt" in America?
9. Name three factors back of milk prices.
10. Why is competition keener among producers of butter than of milk?
11. Why would it be desirable to have sanitary requirements for milk uniform throughout the country?
12. Do city health regulations ordinarily apply to milk for cream and butter?
13. Explain the way in which milk-producer cooperatives affect the price of milk.
14. What pear is most widely grown in the United States?
15. Consumers should look for what qualities in pears to be purchased?
16. What has been done recently to keep pear prices on an even keel?
17. Do any of the canned pears stocked by your grocer carry quality grades?
18. What is corned beef? Does it come from different quality grades of beef?
19. What is the difference between mutton and lamb?
20. Are processors of poultry products required by law to have Federal inspection of their plants?

## OUR POINT OF VIEW

**The CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production**

To that end the CONSUMERS' GUIDE emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the CONSUMERS' GUIDE makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.

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